

A Vindication  
OF  
INFORMERS

OF  
*The Breaches of the LAWS*  
Against  
**Prophaneness and Immorality.**

Asserting and Proving  
*The Lawfulness and Necessity of Informing.*

S H E W I N G  
That all *Sober Christians*, and *Good Neighbours*, are  
called in *Duty* to joyn therein.

A N D  
Answering **OBJECTIONS** made by *Ill* or  
*Ignorant Men*, against those *Pious* and *Useful* Per-  
sons, who out of Love to **GOD** and their *Neigh-*  
*bours*, do reckon themselves obliged in Con-  
science, to Inform against the *Vicious*.

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A VINDICATION

OF

THE PRINCIPLES

OF

THE THEORY OF THE LAW

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Printed at Edinburgh, 1801.



( 3 )

## *A Vindication of Informers of the Breaches of the Law against Prophaneness and Immorality, &c.*

**P**ROPHANITY AND VICE, are known to be so Destructive to Soul and Body, Dishonourable to the Holy Christian Religion, Opposite to the Laws of GOD, and Laws of this, and other well governed Kingdoms; That one may readily think, the same should find little Encouragement in this Nation, but that, on the contrary, all Reasonable Men and Women would be such Friends to themselves, their Religion and Countrey as, without any Perswasives, they would be Active and bestir themselves, in using all Legal Methods for Suppressing Immorality and Vice.

But such is the Wickedness and Folly of many of this present Age, that they who appear in Opposing the Deluge of Prophaneness, meet with many Discouragements in that good Work, and that not only from Debauchees, but even from some who pretend to Religion; So that tho' there hath been of late some Efforts made for suppressing Vice, and that MAGISTRATS have shown some Readiness to hear any *Dilations* made to them thereanent: Yet not so many, as might have been expected, have been pleased to shew their Love to GOD and their Neighbours, by giving INFORMATION to *Magistrats, Ministers*, or others, of the Sins they have been Witnesses to, that thereby the guilty may be censured, and punished conform to Law.

And therefore, it was thought convenient, yet further to enforce to that Duty to Excerpt and Cull out what is here written, from some *Prints* lately come abroad, that the same might be published, and more easily conveyed to the hands of some, who, its hoped, upon reading thereof, will not any longer ly by in *Gallio*, and unconcerned manner, as hitherto they have done.

The late Reverend, Learned, and Pious Mr. GILBERT RULE, in his Weekly Sermons he preached before his Death, (the Substance whereof was printed) does most clearly and convincingly prove, That *Informing* against Immorality, is a Duty enjoined by the LORD, which all Christians are bound to Conscience, and must answer to GOD for the neglect of it.

And therein he adduces, FIRST, *Scripture Precepts*, as *Levit. 19. and 17. Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart, Thou shalt in any ways rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.* Where, tho' *Reproving*, and not *Informing*, is mentioned yet the Reason in the Text reacheth the one, as well as the other, If thou *Reprove*, and the Sinner doth not Reform, If thou bring it not before them, we can curb him, thou sufferest Sin upon him, and hatest him in thy Heart; Because thou doest not use the best means thou can to reclaim him. *Matth. 18. and 17.* express to this purpose, so is *Levit. the 5th. and 1st.* And if a Soul Sin, and be the Voice of Swearing, and is a Witness, whether he hath seen or known of it, if he doth utter it, then he shall bear his Iniquity. The Word may be understood of *Excommunication, Blasphemies, &c.* And by Parity of Reason, may be extended to other gross Sins. See *Deut. 21st, 18th. and 19th.*

SECONDLY, By *Scripture Examples*, Ezra the 9<sup>th</sup>. and 1<sup>st</sup>. The PRINCES become INFORMERS, and thought not this Duty below them; see 1 Cor. 13<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. THIRDLY, He proves it by *Reason*, and asserts it is the Duty of every one, that liveth in any Society, to make Conscience to seek the Good and Standing thereof: Now gross Sins and Immoralities, are the speediest and most effectual Ways and Means, to ruine a Church or Nation, Hos. 4<sup>th</sup>. and 15<sup>th</sup>. Isa. 24<sup>th</sup>. 51<sup>st</sup>. 61<sup>st</sup>. The suffering of Sin to abound, (by omitting of what is our Duty for curbing of it) is as if we saw some opening a Sluce, where the whole Countrey is like to be drowned, and yet neither do hinder it, nor give Notice to them, who might hinder it: Or, as if we saw a House on Fire, and made no Help, nor call for any Help to quench it, would not all the World condemn us, as Careless and Unconcerned Wretches, if, in such a Case, we should not put to our Hands, or make some Appearance? Again, gross sinning is open Rebellion against the GOD of Heaven, and Treason against his Crown and Dignity. Now, if Concealing, and not Revealing Treason against an Earthly King, be a Crime of a high Nature, much more it is so, to see the MAJESTY of GOD affronted, and CHRIST'S BLOOD trampled upon, by a Generation of Insolent and GOD daring Sinners, and not to do what we can, for repairing of his Glory, by the *Repentance* and *Punishment* of such open Rebels against Heaven. Further, if any Man wrong our good Name? What Zeal will we shew to get Reparation, by *Informing* them who can do us Justice? and should we not much more shew that Zeal for the Honour of GOD?

Every Christian should give what Help he can, in his Station, to them who have Authority to punish, or censure Scandalous Sinners, both to the *Church* and to the *Magistrats*: And they who deny, or withhold their Assistance, are guilty before GOD, of hindering the good Work of suppressing Vice, they side with the *Devil*, and do what they can, to defend and secure his Kingdom: They will not appear, as they ought, for CHRIST and his Interest; And I wonder, how such Persons can pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, when they will not speak a word for CHRIST's Kingdom, which consisteth in Holiness, or against the Kingdom of *Satan*, which consisteth in the *Sins* and *Immoralities* that abound among Men: There are two ways, that all Men, even private Persons, may give Assistance to Magistrats, and to Church Judicatures, for suppressing Sin, and which they cannot with a good Conscience withhold, *viz.* INFORMATION and WITNESS-HEARING, every one ought to *inform* of what scandalous Sins come to their Knowledge, when this Information can any way contribute, to bring the Offender to due Censure or Punishment: There be too many, who make little or no Conscience of this Duty, tho' it be nothing contrary to the Love of our Neighbour, (as some pretend) we may shew Hatred to his *Sin*, and yet Love his *Person*; Yea to overlook his Sins, and let him go on in them, without a Check, is really to hate him, and to be cruel to his Soul, as it were, to let your Child die of a Sore, rather than to put him to some Pain in dressing it. The SPIRIT of GOD calleth for Hatred (not Love) to our Brother, to suffer Sin upon him, *Levit. 19. and 17.* which we are guilty of, when more private means cannot reclaim the Sinner,



and yet we will not use this last Remedy. Besides, if any think, that even *Correction* or *Punishment* is not like to reclaim the *Obstinate Sinner*, we should, in that Case, show Love to the Church, and to the Nation; rather than to such a profligate Person, who is a Plague to the Society where he liveth, by corrupting others, and bringing the Judgment of GOD on himself and the Land: It is Cruelty to the Publick, to spare such an one, who should either be restrained, or taken away from doing more mischief. The neglect of this Duty proceedeth from a want of due ZEAL for GOD, and against Sin: And indeed, this is the most frequent Cause of it, the slight thoughts that we have of Sin, and the mean Apprehensions that People have of GOD, his Glory, and of his Displeasure against Sin, is the Cause, why People can so easily bear with it, and do so little to get it suppressed, see *Psal. 50. 18. and 21. &c. Indifferency and Luke-warmness* in GOD's Matters, and even about what he most hateth, to wit, Sin, is the Sin and Plague of this Generation, it was foretold, *Matth. 24. and 12.* and we see it come to pass. One great Cause, why People are so backward to assist the *Magistrate or Church*, in bearing down *Immorality*, is because the Name of an *INFORMER* hath been very odious: But this Scrouple is built upon a Mistake of them, who mind and look to words more than things. It is true indeed, it hath always been infamous to inform against our Neighbour of that which is good, and for serving GOD, or doing his Duty, that so good Men may be punished for *Righteousness* sake, by persecuting Rulers, or a corrupt Church, or to Inform against any out of Malice, or for selfish or ill Designs, such an Informer was *Doeg*, whom *David* reproveth, *Psal. 52. and 1.* But nothing of all this, says any thing against *Informers* of the Crimes of WHORE-MONGERS, DRUNKARDS, CURSERS, SWEARERS, SABBATH-BREAKERS, &c. that the Glory of GOD, and our Holy Religion, may be vindicated, that gross Sins may be curbed, that the Church and Nation may have somewhat, at least, of the Out-side of Religion; Is it a good Consequence, Magistrates ought not to punish Men for *Well-doing*: Therefore, they should punish no body for *Ill-doing*? It is as bad an Inference, to say, it is odious to inform against one for Praying, or Hearing the Word, therefore we should not inform against our Neighbour, for Cursing and Swearing, and other gross Immoralities.

But its like it may be said, Why should we thus endeavour to suppress Sin? I Answer 1<sup>st</sup>. *The Love of GOD* should engage to this; Sin is the most Odious thing to God: Therefore if we regard Him, we should labour to get it removed out of His sight, that it may not provoke Him. He will not dwell in a sinful Soul or Nation. As we desire him to dwell amongst us, let us labour to rid the Land of Wickedness, if a Man whom we Love and Respect be to come to our House, if we know any thing that is Odious or Loathsome to him, or that will give him Offence, we will be careful to remove that out of his sight; much more should we do so to the Glorious and Holy GOD, if we would have Him to dwell in the Land. See *Deut. 23. and 14.*

2<sup>dly</sup>. *Our abhorring of Sin*, should engage us to this Duty, every one who hath a due Detestation of Sin, will find it a necessary Duty that he cannot shake off. And it is evident, That Peoples slackness in this, is from the slight Thoughts they

they have of these Sins that are Abominations in the sight of God. Even these Immoralities that brought the horrible wrath of GOD on CHRIST, when he took the Guilt of them upon him: And for which many are this Day roaring in Hell under endless Torments; Yea, they have brought such Plagues on People and Nations, as may make ones Ear tingle to hear of them; yet even these are by many amongst us lookt on as small Matters, they can easily pass them by, or excuse them in a Friend, yea plead for Exemption from Punishment and Censure for them who are Guilty. Ah! Sin, and breaking of Gods Law has with many lost its Name and Nature, and is become almost a harmless thing in this Degenerate Age, it hath not that sound to many of us that it had to David, *Psal.* 119. *Vers.* 136, 139, 153. And *Fer.* 9. 1. and 14, 17. And the People of God, *Ezek.* 9. and 4. Alas! such a Temper is very little to be found amongst us, and therefore there is so little done in bearing down of Sin.

3ly. The Love and Compassion we owe to Sinners who are madly destroying their own Souls, doth alas make it a necessary Duty, if it is a good Office and Expression of Love to a mad Man, who is like to destroy himself, to bind him, even tho it should displease and hurt him: Even so it is in this Case, It is sad to look on unconcernedly, and see Sinners damning their own Souls, to see them running to the dreadful Pit of Eternal Torments, and to do nothing that may stop their mad Career; This is an Inhumanity, and Barbarous Cruelty, and that to the immortal Soul. If we be commanded, *Exod.* 23. 4, 5. *Dent.* 22. 1, 2, 3, 4. To shew Pity to our Enemies Ox, Ass, or other Beasts going astray, or lying under a burden: It is certainly much more our Duty to shew pity to our Neighbours immortal Soul, which is of so great a value, that a whole world cannot Ransom, and when once lost, is for ever lost, *Mat.* 16. 26. *Psal.* 49. 8.

4thly. Pity to the Church and Nation, doth also make it our Duty; These sinful ways, if not restrained, will bring on fearful and desolating Judgments. Therefore, as when there is a Fire in the City, that threatneth to lay it in Ashes: Every one should be ready to make what help he can, so should it be in this Case; yea, our own Interest should set us a work, we are like to share in the common Calamity when it cometh, and the rather if we be doing nothing to prevent it, and we may bear our share of it with an ill Conscience, if we have had no Zeal against the crying Sins which procure it: It is them that shew a Holy Zeal against sin, that the Lord will mark out for Mercy in a Day of publick Calamity, *Ezek.* 9. and 4.

5thly. The Duty that every one oweth to God, and the Service we are obliged to do to Him, Is a further Obligation on us: We owe all we have or can do to God; Our uttermost Service is too little for the Obligations he hath laid on us: All of us should say, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards me.* *Psal.* 116. and 12. Render him your Service to the outmost of your power, even Kings are commanded to serve God, *Pf.* 2. 11. And all People, *Pf.* 23. 30. *Pf.* 27. 11. *Rom.* 12. 1. We should Lament that we can do so little for him, and neglect nothing we can do; we must lay out our selves for our Glorious and Good God, not only in that which is easie, safe, or will cost us little or nothing, but



in whatever may advance his Glory, or prevent his Dishonour: Whatsoever Trouble, Hazard, Pains, or Cost it may infer, let nothing hinder us from doing him Service.

6thly. *The blessed Effects of such Endeavours*, should engage us to use them with all Care and Chearfulness; we may expect that the Lord will bless Endeavour (where they are honestly used) towards the desired End: He hath in a good measure Blessed the Endeavours of others, and we hope he will not be wanting to ours: And Oh! what a lovely thing were it, to see **PROPHANENESS** Banished from *Streets, Mercats*, and see it hunted out of Corners, to see bold Sinners standing in awe to Sin, to see *Drunkards, Whore-Mongers, Cursers, Swearers, Sabbath breakers, &c.* Reformed: To see Godliness more in Request, and open sins Universally abhorred: And tho we see not what we desire this way, yet it is encouraging when we see any to appear for God, that He hath a Party in the Land, who so long as they own him, he will own them: And if we shall see no visible Encouragement (which God forbid) yet we are sure, that such honest Endeavours shall bring a Blessing on them and their Families, who make Conscience of them.

7thly. *The fearful Effects of Sin and Immorality uncurbed*, should awaken all of us to mind this Duty; it will assuredly bring on the ruine of the Nation, we must set our selves to destroy it, or it will destroy us: Even the Godly are like to share in the Ruine, especially if they have not been Zealous against it, and for the Lord. It is like to have these sad Effects, if over-look'd, *First*, It will grow: The Devils Kingdom, is not like to fall of it self, neither will the Wicked in the World readily weary of *Prophaneness* and Reform themselves, unless something be done to stop them in their Career to Hell, and put them to consider on their ways: Its true, the Lord can destroy Satans Kingdom without the help of Man, but he usually worketh by Means: Do we not see one Nation worse than another, the Prophet observed it in his days, *Jer. 16. 11. and 12.* and so may we in ours; yea, this Malady will not yield to slight Remedies, but will rather encrease, unless Potent, and effectual means be used. All that we can do, will be too little, even by way of Means: Alas! we have sad Experience of this: A floodgate of all manner of Wickedness opened, since many of us may remember, and of late, means having been used to stop us; but to small Effect: It hath rather grown upon our hands, and will do so still, unless we be awakened to set about this Work more thoroughly and in good earnest.

But after all that is said, I know it has always been the Method of Satan and his Accomplices, to oppose the Reformation of Manners, so soon as aimed at by any; so at this time especially, as if hell it self were broken loose in defence of Impiety, the profane Debauchees in this City and elsewhere, foreseeing what is like to befall them, from the hand of Justice, by a strict Execution of Laws against Immorality: And finding no shelter for their Villany, under the shadow of our Religious and Faithfull Magistrats, they knowing, that though Magistrats were never so Zealous and Faithfull, they cannot punish Vice unless they know of it, and get Information thereanent. And if Informers be wanting, then no

Dilations, and consequently the guilty cannot be punished, but must needs escape: Hence they judge it greatly their interest, to Discourage and Represent Informers as ill as they can, knowing this will be the way to fear some and Amuse all; and it is sad, that such Debauchees acted by Satan, telling Lies, should be better believed, than the Servants of God telling Truth according to His Word: And Therefore to let the World see the unreasonableness of their Objections, I have thought fit to insert such of them as have come to my knowledge, and Answers thereto.

The frivolous Objections and groundless Reasons, why some Refuses, and shifts their giving Assistance and Concurrence, in bringing to deserved Punishment prophane and Immoral Persons, are chiefly these following, as,

1<sup>mo</sup>, It is objected, That it is unworthy of a Gentleman, or good Neighbour, to be an Informer, and the Name Informer is thought scandalous and reproachful by many. To which it is answered, That this is most groundless, and all good Men, upon serious Consideration, will rather judge him unworthy of that Character, that, in this Case, will not act the part of an Informer: Will any have the Face to say, That it is not the part of a Gentleman, to do what he can, to prevent the Ruine of the Community to which he belongs, and whereof he is a Member, and to inform against these, who are Destroyers thereof? Surely not, and immoral Courses being not only prejudicial to, but wholly destructive of all Christian Society, it is certainly the part of every one, be what he will, to Inform against the Prophane, unless they think the Name and Profession of a Christian below them. Or will any say, That it is unbecoming that Character, in a Conflagration, to discover and Inform against the Incendiary: Or, when being assaulted by a mad Man, not to inform of the Matter, for the preventing future Hazard to himself and others. Now sinful Courses may very well be compared to these: And certainly, he rather deserves the Character of a Gentleman, a good Christian Neighbour and Countrey Man, who, in Opposition to the impious Rage and Fury of such a Rascally and Villanous Mobb, does set himself against the same, and that not only by Information, but also by Witness-bearing, when called to it, and that upon Oath: It is a glorifying GOD, when we call him to Witness to the Truth, we being called to it by them who have power; and to shun Witnessing out of Favour to a Scandalous Immoral Criminal, when telling the Truth may contribute to the bearing down of Sin, is to serve the Devil, and contributes to hold up his Kingdom, and deny that Service that is due to GOD: But to swear falsely, to conceal Wickedness, is Atheism, and a horrid Abomination in the Sight of GOD, which he will not suffer to go unpunished. But to make this Objection utterly impertinent, and of no force, I further reply, That none will think the Name of an Informer reproachful, when their Worldly Interest is concerned: He who dilateth a Thief or a Robber, or can give any Information of Theft, Robbery, and such like, is Commended by all, and Condemned by none, but a Fool, a mad Man, or *Socii Crimini*, and its thought no Disgrace, to be an Informer and Prosecutor in such Matters. And is there the least reason, that it should be thought so, where the Cause of God and Religion is con-



concerned? Shall it be thought Scandalous by any but profligate Persons to  
form against, and prosecute those who are Guilty of Prophane Swearing and  
Cursing, breaking the Sabbath, Drunkness, &c. when it is not thought  
but commendable to Inform of Theft, Murder, &c. besides, the publick Autho-  
ty and Laws of the Land, has declared Swearers, Drunkards, lewd Persons, &c.  
To be dishonourable to God, the Reproach of our Religion, and the discredit  
and weakning of the Government; And pray then consider, whether it's not  
Honourable to appear against them: If there were any base Ends aimed at in the  
Informations, they might indeed be reputed Scandalous; But when on the con-  
trary, there is nothing designed but the Glory of God, and the Good of our  
Brethren, Can any one that carries the face of a Christian, think it Scandalous  
to be an Informer? It is in truth, a very Honourable thing thus to appear  
in the behalfe of God and Religion, by endeavouring to keep up the Honour due  
both, by promoting a most useful and necessary Reformation, and thereby pre-  
venting the just Judgements of God from being Executed upon us. We should in-  
deed be glad, if Men would be prevailed with, by the Methods of Argument  
and Persuasion to have a greater Veneration for Almighty God, and a juster re-  
gard for his Laws than all that Men can do: But since these Methods fail, we  
are thankful to the Civil Government, for enforcing them by legal Penalties  
that so they who will not be influenced by the fear of an Invisible Power, they may  
be by that of a Visible one. And we think our selves obliged in Conscience and Rea-  
son, to make use of those Means which the Laws of the Land do direct, and the  
Government doth allow and countenance for the suppressing of Prophaneness  
and Vice: Since all Laws are useless and insignificant, if they be not put in Exe-  
cution: And how can they be Executed, if the Breaches of them be not Inform-  
ed against? Nay, we should think our selves utterly inexcusable, as being faith-  
ful to our God, by neglecting his Honour, and not doing our Duty to our Countrey  
if we did not endeavour the Execution of these Laws, which are made to put  
stop to these practises, which tend to ruine it.

2dly. It is Objected, That Informations may be the occasion of Discord and  
Division among People. To this I Answer briefly, As it's false to think the  
Impunity of Vice will ever advance Union, so I hope no honest Hearted Chri-  
stian Neighbour will buy Concord at so dear a Rate, for then they must either  
go on with the Wicked to the same Excess of Riot, or Conneive at their Sins, and  
partake of their Judgements. Its Vice that destroyes the cement of Concord  
and Untieth the Bonds of Brotherly Affection. And lastly, If this should be su-  
stained, from the same Topick we might argue, the Civil Magistrat, ( whose  
Office it is to punish the Vicious ) to be an unnecessary, yea hurtful Member of  
a Community.

3dly. The next dangerous Consequence they adduce, as attending Information  
of this Nature, is, that thereby Men (say they) are exposed to the Fury and In-  
solence of lewd Men, and to the Redicule and Derision of many sober and well  
meaning good Persons, upbrading us as foolishly singular and biggot. Now, this  
I shall Answer by parts, And as to the first, of being exposed to the Insolence

and Fury of lewd Men. This if duely considered, is but of small Moment in the  
 esteem of any Soul, Elevated beyond the pitch of the Timorous and Cowardly  
 herd of the baser sort of Men: What, shall the Fury or insolent Rage and Vio-  
 lence of lewd and exasperat Ruffians, affright and deter from Duty? Would  
 their Threats affright any of us from seeking our Own of them in a legal way, if  
 any of them were resting to us Money or Goods, by Bond or otherwise: Are  
 we such debased and dastardly Souls, as not to Own and adhere to our Interest,  
 our Religion, yea our God: Or, are we such mean born Slaves, as to crouch un-  
 der so base a Burden, and suffer our selves, our Religion and Laws to be tram-  
 pled under foot by the vilest of Men; Do we want the Benefit and Protection  
 of Laws, or have we Iniquity established by a Law? No sure, blessed be God  
 in otherways: And since we have GOD, the Laws of the Land, and all truly  
 good Men upon our side, we have all the Reason in the World to be Encourag-  
 ed to make a brave, stout and generous Resistance to the bravading Threats and  
 Menaces of Heaven-daring Miscreants, which, if given way to, will unhinge all  
 societies and deprive us of Liberty, Property, and every thing valuable in a  
 World. Is it not then more Eligible according to our Baptismal Vow, and o-  
 ther Engagements to Act the part of Valiant, and Brave Souldiers, under the  
 Conduct of Christ, the great Captain of our Salvation, shewing a Valourous  
 and undaunted Courage, when the Cause is every way so Good, and the Reward  
 so Great; especially since there can scarce an Instance be given in History, Sa-  
 cred or Prophane, that any have been brought to an unhappy End, in such an  
 Heroick Quarrel; Neither have any ever regrated their being Combatants  
 in this Holy War, who if they attain not to Trophies of Victory here, fail not  
 to wear Lawrels of Praise hereafter. As to the second part of the Objection, [*Of  
 being exposed to the Ridicule and Derision of so many well meaning and good Men.*] It is  
 Answered, As we need not value any Ridicule and Derision we can be exposed  
 to for so good a Cause, so I cannot but Grieve, that this should be said to come  
 from the hands of such as do bear the Name of good Men, and do admire the  
 simplicity of such Gentlemen, to say no worse? Do they think we are fond of be-  
 ing the Objects of lewd Mens Rage and Fury, or do they fancy we are Ambi-  
 tious of the Reproach and Obloquy we are daily exposed unto, upon the account  
 of opposing Vice? Is it not as Natural to us to seek after Ease and Quiet as  
 it is for them, and have we not an equal Claim to the Love, Commendation,  
 and Applause of the World; And may they not be as easily attained by us, as  
 by them, if pursued with the same Ardency and Fervour of Spirit? Are we more  
 the Enemies of Mankind, as these who Connive and Laugh at their Wickedness,  
 and give loose Reins to their Licentious Practices? Or will any be so Cruel,  
 Unjust, and Unfare to us, as to think we appear against Vice out of Malice and  
 Hatred to the Vicious; Or, can they imagine that we have any pleasure in  
 informing and Witnessing before Humane Tribunals, and confirming our Evi-  
 dences by solemn and Sacred Oaths? No sure, This is most unpleasant Work,  
 and very far from being our Choise; But while we see our selves under a Necessi-  
 ty of viewing Vice in its most Monstruous and formidable Shapes, and having  
 to our great Grief, heard the Sacred and Holy Name of our God, Torn and  
 rend-



rendred by the Blasphemous Mouths of Wicked Men, and his Laws violat by such every moment: And since the Spirit of God tells us plainly, *Levit. 5.* at the beginning, *That if a Soul bear the Voice of Swearing, or know of it, if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his Iniquity:* We judge it our Duty in Conscience, our Interest, yea our Honour, to Inform of such, who have no regard to the venerable, Sacred, and Tremendous Majesty of the GREAT GOD, whose we profess our selves to be, and whom we serve: And if any will but duely ponder it it is the greatest of Cruelty and Folly to suffer such to go unpunished; Yea, the unerring Spirit of God, *Levit. 16. 17.* Calls it, *a bating our Brother in our Heart and bearing of Sin for him,* as the words, *Not suffering Sin upon him,* may be also rendred from the Original Text. From all which it will appear, That to Inform against the Immoral and Vicious, is Honourable, Equitable, and Charitable. And if this be unworthy of any bearing the Name of a Gentleman or good Christian an Neighbour; or if it deserve the Ridicule and Mockrie of serious Men, I leave any to judge.

Arbly, But its said by some, *That the World is so Bad, and Evil Men so Resolute that there is little hope to do much good this way.* Men may make (say they) a Disturbance among their Neighbours, and get their ill Will, and perhaps meet with ill Treatment; But the World is not like to be much Mended, or Bettered, by such Methods. For Answer, This is indeed spoken like those, who do not care whether the World be Mended, or not, and whose Principle it is, to let it go as it will. But it becomes us to enquire, whether, to be thus Unconcerned about our GREAT MASTER's Will and Honour, be to act like a Christian, who is to be the Light of the World, and the Salt of the Earth, and to go about doing Good: We must indeed expect to meet with much Opposition, but our LORD himself bore the Contradiction of Sinners, and we need not think it hard, to suffer a small part of that, which He himself was pleased to undergo. We have great Reason to think, That Men may be wrought upon, by these Endeavours of ours: The present Shame and Punishment, is very apt to raise in them Serious Thoughts, and cause them to bethink themselves, as we know it has done to many, since these Methods have been used. However, supposing that many of the Persons we Inform against, are not really Mended in their Hearts, but do only outwardly abstain, from being publicly Prophane and Immoral, yet even by this Mean, we do Honour to our Profession, by shewing, how much it Discountenances such Practices; And we keep Men from publicly Dishonouring it, (who do, as it were, bid an open Defiance to GOD, and his Laws.) and may prevent National Judgments. It is a great Service to Religion, to suppress Scandalous Sins, which greatly affront and endanger it. We may indeed be somewhat injured in our Worldly Business, which I dare say will not be much; but shall we prefer a small Temporal Interest, to the Honour of GOD? Shall we be contented, to see his Religion abused, his Authority defied, and his Laws disregarded, for fear of losing some little Temporal Gain by it? To set such Value on the Things of this Life, may be Worldly Prudence: But where is our Christianity all the while, which teacheth us, not only to leave Houses and Land

to be content, if required, to lay down our Lives for the Sake of CHRIST, in his Gospel? Which those are not very likely to do, who can contentedly bear the Name of GOD Blasphemed, and not take the least Notice of it, and see Laws broken, without being so much concerned, as to Inform against it.

It is objected further, *That to meddle in these things, and to endeavour a Reformation of Manners, is what does not belong to us, and is therefore a Pragmaticalness in us, impertinent meddling.* In Answer to this, Not only the Word of GOD, as before made evident, but even the Laws of the Land, lays this upon us as a Duty, particularly *Act 31. Parl. 1696 and 97*, Authorizes any Person whatsoever, to pursue, and consequently, to dilate in such Cases: And (in these express words) to whom it doth, or may belong, are strictly Required and Commanded, to perform their Duties in the Premises punctually, as they will be answerable. And likewise, the General Assembly held in the Year 1697, does earnestly Exhort all-Christians to remember, That in this Matter, they have to do with the great and Terrible GOD, whose Honour is to be preferred, and whose Wrath to be feared, before all other Considerations whatsoever. And are we not commanded, *Heb. 13. 17. To obey them who Rule over us*, and, *Rom. 13. 15. To be subject unto the higher Powers*, see also *1 Pet. 2. 13.* And can we, with a good conscience, disobey such Lawful and Just Commands of our Superiors? No sure-

What times do we live in, when its thought to be acting the Busy-body, to meddle in that which ought to be the dearest to us of all things in the World, *viz. the Cause of GOD and Religion*. Are we not yet sensible of the great Mischief that is done, and of the Horrid and Notorious Scandals which are brought on our most holy Profession, by that Impiety which is so general amongst us? Are we not convinced of the imminent Danger we are in, by our many Provocations against the most High? If we were, we should not surely think it Pragmatical or Impertinent, to endeavour to put a Stop to the Current of *Vice and Prophaneness*, which does so much Scandal, and brings us into so much Disgrace and Danger. We should then think it as much Pragmaticalness, to endeavour to quench a Raging Fire, or put a Stop to the Infection of some Contagious Distemper. The Honour of GOD is what, as Men, and as Christians, we are bound to maintain. We cannot, when that is concerned, remain Indifferent, and keep our Innocence at the same time. We must not then be affrighted from doing our Duty, for the Account of being reputed Forward and Busy. Its a good Observation of one, that that Man has his Religion hanging very loose about him, that will be belied and Jeered out of it.

The Sixth and last Objection that I have met with, *That by punishing those frequent Drinking Houses at Unlawful and Unseasonable Times, and Suppressing Disorderly Houses, the King's Excise and Revenue will be Lessened*, is scarce worth answering, since besides that, its an Affront to His Majesty, to say, That he would see His Revenue encreased by the Sins of the People: It is certain, That the accountable Multitude of Ale-Houses Impoverishes many more than it Enriches. And it would be remembred, That many of these Ale-Houses, especially in Wynds, Back-Lanes, and down Cloffes, are kept by the Meaner and Basest

Sort



Sort of People, (most of them not Burgessees,) and are common Receptacles for Whores, Thieves, and Idle Vagabonds, Resettlers of Stollen Goods, and where much Sin and Wickedness is Committed, and therefore ought carefully to be look'd after, discouraged, and their Number diminished. And may not the Encrease of our Poor be, in some measure, ascribed to the Encrease of Ale-Houses within these few Years? Now there are none, but must own, That where the Subjects of a Kingdom are Poor, there the Revenues cannot be great.

On the whole, I would beg all, who read this Paper, to consider, Whether as the Sworn Servants of GOD, they are not obliged to vindicate his Honour. Whether they ought not, as Christians, to endeavour the Salvation of all Men. And whether, as Subjects of the State, in which they live, they are not obliged to obey its Injunctions. And then to reflect, whether, by Refusing to Appear in the Cause of GOD and Religion, and to Act, as if we had no Concern for us for our Brethren, and to Excuse our selves, from putting in Execution the Laws, which are made to secure that Respect which we ought to pay to GOD and his Laws, be not to Renounce these Obligations, and to Act contrary to them. If it be, you are surely to be blamed, and not they, who take Care to Act answerable to those Obligations, which they are under. The Truth of it is we have, for the most part, been scandalously Remiss, and Negligent in this Matter. Had the Professors of Religion expressed the same Zeal and Concern, and been as forward to appear for it, as its Enemies have been to appear against it, I dare say, Vice and Impiety had not risen to such a fearful Height. GOD be thanked, we have the Laws of the Land on our side, and have now Societies of Persons here, and in several other parts of the Nation, who have shown the World their Zeal, in promoting the Execution of these Laws, and have had therein some Success; And had we generally, but as much Courage in these things which concern GOD and Religion, as in those which concern our selves, we should not see so many appear so publicly against them, and might still hope to see happy Days. But, Ah! Its a certain Sign of our *Degeneracy* and *Corruption* when so great a Clamour is raised, against the Attempt of a Reformation of those Enormities, that there are no more ready and willing to join in this good Work. Religion has been Treated as her Master was, in being Crucified betwixt her Open Enemies and her False Friends. But I hope, for the time to come, the Friends of Piety and Goodness, will have a little more Courage and Resolution, so as not to be afraid, to appear against those, who bid Defiance to them, by breaking through the Bounds of all that is Sacred, Civil and Decent; And that the *Ministers of the Gospel* will put Men, and especially such, as have Oaths and Trust upon them in these Matters, in Mind of their Duty herein. For to be ashamed in this Case, is highly Criminal, and unworthy of a Christian, to permit the Name of GOD, whom we are bound, by the most Sacred Ties, to treat with the utmost Honour and Respect, to be Vilified and Prophaned, is at once to Reproach the Publick, and our selves, it is an odious Scandal to Christianity, and that which causes the Revilings of its Enemies, to permit GOD's Laws, not only to be Neglected, but to be openly Affronted, when its easily in our power to prevent

prevent it: And we bring great Odium on our selves, to refuse to appear, when there is Occasion, on the behalf of what we profess the greatest Regard for.

May we all then be Inspired with such a Zeal, for the Honour of GOD and Religion, and the Salvation of others, as to take all Opportunities to advance them, that those Judgments may not fall upon us, which are threatned to be inflicted on a People, Encouraging and Practising Impiety: And till we Repent and Reform, we need not expect one Hours Security from the flying Arrows of GOD's Judgments: For even, while this Paper was a printing, we were all Alarmed by a Fearful Fire breaking out in the Land-Mercat, which hath Consumed and laid Waste a great many Houses and Goodly Buildings, and Ruined many Creditable Families, having this Speciality in it, and Additional Stroke to former Fires, That, by This, several Persons lost their Lives, some whereof, both Young and Old, were Burned Alive in the Flames, Children Skreeching for their Parents, and Parents Crying out for the Loss of their Children, notwithstanding this Judgment was sent down from Heaven at Noon-time of the Day, which one would think, might have prevented all Surprize: And besides, what a frightful Spectacle was it, to see Men and Women, betwixt Hope and Despair, throwing themselves out of Windows three or four Stories high, to Escape the Fury of the Flames already Flashing in their Faces. And here we must lay our Hands upon our Mouths, our Mouths in the Dust, and stoop before the Tremendous Justice of GOD, and to the Mysterious Conduct of Divine Providence; The Sovereign LORD of the World (the Righteous Judge of all the Earth) making the Righteous to suffer with the Wicked, and to share deeply in the common Calamity, some of his own Faithful Servants, who were, and still are near and dear to him, having lost all they had, as to Earthly Comforts, and escaped like *Job*, as it were, with the Skin of their Teeth; So that it is no wonder, that even a Holy *David*, while a Sinner, cries out, *Psal. 119. 120. My very Flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* However, This is certainly another Mark of GOD's heavy Displeasure against this Poor and Sinful City, which hath not, as yet, taken Warning from former Strokes, so as to REPENT and REFORM. What! Have we already forgot the late dreadful Conflagration, which threatned to turn our whole City into Ashes; that a Jealous GOD must be provoked, to surprize us yet with another of the same Nature? Shall we, as it were, oblige the Almighty still to Proclaim his Law, accomplish his Threatnings, and write our Sins in Fire and Flames, and to make us feel that which we will not believe? Our former Miseries, especially of late, are so obvious to all, that we think it needless here to Enumerate them, the smarting Effects whereof cannot escape the Observation of the most stupid Gallio among us. Ah! will nothing bring our Sins to Remembrance, when the Arrows of God are sticking fast within us, his Hand pressing us sore, and we Consumed by the Blow of his Hand? (What ever be the Instruments of our Woe, it is God that sends it, it is He that does it.) Shall we never come to have a due Regard but to this one Scripture, *Levit. 26. 24. And if ye will not be Reformed by Me by these things, but will walk contrary unto Me: Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your SINS.* And *Verf. 27. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but will walk contrary unto Me: Then will I walk contrary unto you also in Fury, and I, even I, will Chastise you,*



*you yet seven times more for your Sins.* Do we not from this clearly see, That so long as a **PROFESSING PEOPLE** continues in Sinning, even as long God seems resolved to continue in Punishing; And let us not think it strange that it should be so, especially in Scotland, a Land of great Light, *Clothed with many Vows, Solemn and National Engagements.* And now, since we have left our **FIRST LOVE** and since the Holy Fire of **ZEAL** for God, for his Glory, for his House, for his Interest, and against all manner of Sin and Wickedness, is like to wear quite out from amongst us; Is it any wonder He is sending us Fiery Messengers of another kind, and all to Awaken and Rouse us out of our woful Lethargy: But blessed be God, all are not asleep (else our Case were altogether desperat): There are not a few, we hope, who do take the Alarm, and do begin to look about them, to Consider their former Ways, and to Repent of former Sins; And who likewise are endeavouring in their respective Stations, to get **REFORMATION** advanced in the Hearts and Lives of Others; And we reckon it our Mercy, that such happy Instruments are any way Encouraged and Supported by Authority, and by the Laws of the Land. Therefore we will not Imagine (especially upon the back of this repeated stroak,) that any will hereafter venture to Censure or Reflect upon **HONEST INFORMERS** (perhaps as good Gentlemen as themselves) who now begin to see a greater Necessity then ever, to raise the **HUY** and **CRY** after the **SIN** and **WICKEDNESS** of the Place and Land we live in, and to search and find out those **ACHANS**, who are the procuring and provoking Causes of this, and all other Judgements inflicted upon us by a **SIN-REVENGING GOD**. We hope likewise, That by this, **MAGISTRATS** and **JUDGES** will be yet further stirred up, and Animated with **ZEAL** and **RESOLUTION** to punish **VICE**, and to find out the **VICIOUS**.

To Conclude then, after all that hath been said, from expresse Scripture, plain Reason, urgent Necessity, and true Christian Policy in Vindication of such **WORTHY INFORMERS**, and the necessary Duty of dilating these guilty of Immorality and gross Scandals: It may be rationally expected, That all and every one who pretend to any thing of the fear of God, and true Sympathy with the Perishing Souls of their fellow Christians, will speedily and readily Appear, and offer their timeous Assistance in this great and necessary Work, wherein the Glory of God, and our own publick Safety are so eminently Concerned, and that all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, will Unite their Force, as one Man in their respective Stations and Capacities, whether Private or Publick, in the Help of the Lord against the Mighty, against a Mighty and Raging Devil, his Mighty and Malicious Agents, the Mighty and Impetuous Torrent of all kind of Abominations overflowing all its banks, as it were in spite of both God and Man: Let all who are, or will joyn, on the Lords side, appear Suddenly, and Resolutely, without Feud or Favour, against such bold Heaven-daring Sinners: What? Is not even Misprision of Treason against an earthly King, (as I hinted already) reckoned Capital, and punished by Death? and shall we dare to be Guilty of Concealing and not Revealing of High Treason against **THE GREAT GOD**, *who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Our God over all, Blessed for ever.*

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